

Amendments To the Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown. Applicants reserve the right to pursue any cancelled claims at a later date.

1.-9. (cancelled)

10. (new) A method for controlling a network element in a communication network, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of behavior rules by the network element;  
selecting a behavior rule according to operating conditions by the network element; and  
forwarding data packets in accordance with the selected behavior rule by the network element.

11. (new) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the operating conditions are given by any combination of line interruption, node failure, network loading, connection establishment, or network reconfiguration.

12. (new) The method according to Claim 10, wherein a behavior rule contains a selection of one of a plurality of paths.

13. (new) The method according to Claim 11, wherein a behavior rule contains a selection of one of a plurality of paths.

14. (new) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the behavior rules are made in a control entity.

15. (new) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the behavior rules are made in a control entity.

16. (new) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the behavior rules are made in a control entity.

17. (new) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the behavior rules are formed in a control entity individually assigned to a network element.

18. (new) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the behavior rules are formed in a control entity individually assigned to a network element.

19. (new) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the behavior rules can be delivered to the network element by way of network management from a control entity superordinated to a plurality of network elements.

20. (new) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the behavior rules can be delivered to the network element by way of network management from a control entity superordinated to a plurality of network elements.

21. (new) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the behavior rules are created automatically.

22. (new) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the behavior rules are created automatically.

23. (new) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the behavior rules are created automatically.

24. (new) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the method is used in a packet-oriented and/or connectionless communication network.

25. (new) The method according to Claim 10, wherein the network element autonomously or independently selects a behavior rule according to the operating conditions.

26. (new) A method for coupling a plurality of network elements, comprising:  
providing control entities, each assigned to a network element; and

coupling two control entities by a protocol by way of which they exchange information for the harmonization of behavior rules.

27. (new) A method for coupling a plurality of network elements, comprising:

- providing control entities, each assigned to a network element;
- providing a plurality of behavior rules by the network element;
- selecting a behavior rule according to operating conditions by the network element;
- forwarding data packets in accordance with the selected behavior rule by the network element; and

coupling two control entities by a protocol by way of which they exchange information for the harmonization of behavior rules.

28. (new) The method according to Claim 27, wherein the method is used in a packet-oriented and/or connectionless communication network.

29. (new) The method according to Claim 27, wherein the network element autonomously or independently selects a behavior rule according to the operating conditions.